

CHANGES IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

RELATIVE TO

Changes in the public service ; in compliance with a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 10th of August last.

FEBRUARY 1, 1847.

Read, and laid upon the table.

WAR DEPARTMENT, *January 28, 1847.*

SIR: I have the honor to transmit, herewith, reports from the officers in charge of the various bureaux and offices of this department, made pursuant to a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 10th of August last, requiring the heads of the several executive departments to inform the House, "at the commencement of the next session, whether any and what changes can be made in the several branches of the public service, by which greater economy, and more or equal efficiency [can] be secured in their administration."

I have very little to add to the views and suggestions in these reports. It is proper, however, that I should remark that much of the time of the Secretary is taken up in appeals from the Commissioner of Pensions. The appeals are seldom made for the purpose of settling principles, but mostly on the facts of the case. In these latter cases, he is obliged to examine, personally, voluminous documents. It appears to me that the head of the War Department should be relieved from this labor, which necessarily consumes much of his time, and often interferes with important duties.

When expenditures are made upon emergencies, and not in modes strictly authorized, the usual course of legislation has been to direct the accounts to be audited and adjusted by the Secretary of War. This mode of legislation casts upon him the detailed duties of an accounting officer, and requires his personal examination of the most intricate and difficult accounts. In this manner he is also necessarily withdrawn from the more important duties of the department. This duty, it is conceived, might with safety be devolved on the accounting officers.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. L. MARCY, *Secretary of War.*

Hon. J. W. DAVIS,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, December 7, 1846.

SIR: In answer to the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 10th of August last, calling for information as to "whether any and what changes can be made in the several branches of the public service, by which greater economy and more or equal efficiency be secured in their administration," I have the honor to report that, so far as concerns the business conducted in this office, I am not aware of any changes by which the object in view could be accomplished.

I am, sir, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. JONES, *Adjutant General.*

Hon. W. L. MARCY,
Secretary of War.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington City, January 19, 1847.

SIR: In obedience to your directions, I have the honor to report, under the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 10th of August last, that I am not aware that any change can be made in this branch of the service, "by which greater economy, and more or equal efficiency, can be secured in its administration," unless it be by allowing the Quartermaster General the privilege of selecting from the army the officers to be appointed in his department, as well as of all temporary agents which the interest of the service may render necessary—a measure which it is confidently believed would greatly increase both the efficiency and economy of the department.

I am, sir, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

HENRY STANTON,
Assistant Quartermaster General

Hon. WM. L. MARCY,
Secretary of War, Washington city.

PAYMASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE,
December 10, 1846.

SIR: In compliance with the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 10th August, 1846, directing the heads of the several executive departments to inform the House, at the commencement of the present session, "whether any and what changes can be made in the several branches of the public service by which greater economy and more or equal efficiency be secured in the administration," I have the honor to state, that in my annual report on the transactions and fiscal concerns of the pay department for the last fiscal year, dated 10th of November, 1846, I stated as my opinion that it would promote the public interest if Congress would authorize the President to appoint one additional paymaster to each regiment of volunteers, instead of one to every two regiments, as at present authorized by the act of July 5, 1838; and that it would be both just and prudent to increase the salaries of paymasters' clerks to at least seven hun-

dred dollars per annum. I have nothing to add to what is suggested in that report, unless it be to urge, in stronger terms, the importance of authorizing assistant paymasters general, to prevent the necessity of assigning the duty of such officers to subordinate paymasters.

I do not believe that I can suggest any change in the office of the Paymaster General that would promote economy, without lessening the efficiency of the office.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

N. TOWSON, *Paymaster General.*

Hon. WM. L. MARCY,

Secretary of War.

OFFICE OF COMMISSARY GENERAL OF SUBSISTENCE,
Washington, December 7, 1846.

SIR: In obedience to the resolution of the House of Representatives of August 10, 1846, requiring a report as to "what changes can be made in the several branches of the public service by which greater economy and more or equal efficiency be secured in their administration," and referred by you to this office, I have the honor to report that, in my opinion, no reduction can be made in the organization of this department without impairing its efficiency, and injury to the public service.

Most respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEO. GIBSON, *C. G. S.*

Hon. WM. L. MARCY,

Secretary of War.

SURGEON GENERAL'S OFFICE,
December 7, 1846.

SIR: In reply to the resolution of Congress of the 10th of August last, inquiring "whether any and what changes can be made in the several branches of the public service by which greater economy and more or equal efficiency be secured in their administration," I have the honor to state that I do not know that any change can be made in the branch of service under my control which will be productive of greater economy or secure more efficiency in the administration of its affairs than at present exists.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

TH. LAWSON, *Surgeon General.*

Hon. W. L. MARCY,

Secretary of War.

ENGINEER DEPARTMENT,
Washington, December 7, 1846.

SIR: I have to acknowledge the reference to this office of the following resolution of the House of Representatives of August 10, 1846, namely:

"Resolved, That the heads of the several executive departments be, and they are hereby, required to inform this House, at the commence-

ment of the next session, whether any and what changes can be made in the several branches of the public service, by which greater economy and more or equal efficiency be secured in their administration."

And on the subject thereof, I have to report that, as concerns the administration of the Engineer Department, I know of no changes by which greater economy or more or equal efficiency can be secured with the means now applicable.

But my duty will not allow me to close a report of this nature without stating that the pressure of labors in this office is so heavy that there are often too many duties unavoidably imposed on a single individual; and that, consequently, the interests of the country, as regards economy and efficiency, require that there should be in service a greater number of engineer officers.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your most obedient,

JOS. G. TOTTEN,

Colonel and Chief Engineer.

Hon. W. L. MARCY,
Secretary of War.

BUREAU OF TOPOGRAPHICAL ENGINEERS,
Washington, December 16, 1846.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge your direction to report upon a resolution of the House of Representatives of the 10th of August, (as far as the same refers to the duties of this bureau,) requiring information upon the following subjects: "whether any and what changes can be made in the several branches of the public service, by which greater economy and more or equal efficiency be secured in their administration."

As any reasoning upon this resolution must be based upon the duties of the corps, it appears to me essential first to state what these duties are.

By the army regulations it is stated that the duties of the corps of topographical engineers shall consist—

1st. "In surveys for the defence of the frontier, inland and Atlantic, and of positions for fortifications."

2d. "In reconnaissances of the country through which an army has to pass, or in which it has to operate."

3d. "In the examination of all routes of communication by land or by water, both for supplies and for military movements."

4th. "In the construction of military roads, and of permanent bridges connected with them, and, in the absence of officers of the corps of engineers, of military bridges, and of field works for the defence of encampments, fords, ferries, and bridges; and the selecting of places for encampments."

5th. For which purposes, say the regulations, officers of the corps of topographical engineers shall always accompany armies in the field.

6th. The charge of all civil works authorized by acts of Congress, not specially assigned by law to some other branch of service.

7th. Also, by law, the survey of boundary lines between the United States and a foreign power, and between our Territories, and Territories and a State; also, frequently, the survey of Indian boundaries.

8th. Officers of this corps are also assigned, as assistants, to the survey of the coast.

This exposition of the duties of the corps will show the variety of its occupations, requiring a military and mathematical education for its duties generally; talents as astronomers, as topographers, as civil engineers, and as military engineers, in the planning and construction of field works for the defence of encampments, fords, ferries, and bridges.

Experience in the execution of its various duties has shown the want of rank and its experience in the command of parties, and the want of subordinate assistance. These wants frequently oblige the department to employ young civil engineers as assistants, who do not generally possess the desired qualifications, and who have not generally had the drill and other advantages of the course through our military academy. Such employments are also frequently at high rates in comparison to those allowed to officers, who would, if there were enough of them, supply their places.

Experience has also shown another defect in the present organization of the corps, in the absence of all power to enlist men for its duties in the capacities of mechanics and artificers, of various kinds and grades. Many of these have to be employed in the duties of the corps at rates far exceeding that of enlisted men, and in numbers to compensate for want of experience. A trial was made of enlisted men on the survey of the northeastern boundary by a select detachment from the artillery, which resulted greatly to the economy, extent of operations, promptness, and security of that work. They were better guards of the exposed property; always at command; and several of them became good copyists, good calculators, and good surveyors with chain and compass. Hired men can be taught these duties, but they will rarely submit to the necessary schooling; cannot be reduced to discipline, (which is but another word for order and subordination to direction;) will not remain during discomforts and privations, and feel no interest in the duty. The necessity, also, of discharging them as soon as the field duties have ceased, occasions a loss of all they have learned, and is too discouraging to the officer to expect that he will bestow much labor in instructing them. It would perhaps not be judicious, and I do not recommend, that all required of the classes above enumerated should be enlisted; but an experience of many years in the field, and of many as chief of the corps, in the direction of the bureau, justifies me in recommending that a portion, such as master workmen, mechanics, and artificers, should be secured by enlistment, as a measure that would result greatly to the economy and efficiency of the operations of the corps.

Very well-informed young men could be obtained in these capacities, who, while they were serving the government, would also be acquiring a knowledge by which they could afterwards well serve themselves and the wants of society in the capacities of accurate land surveyors.

Under these reflections, and limiting my views to the least number which the wants of the service eminently require, it is respectfully recommended that there be added to the corps of field and topographical engineers one lieutenant colonel, two captains, two first lieutenants, and ten second lieutenants, by regular promotion in the same, and by appointments from the military academy; and that the chief of said corps be authorized to enlist for a term not exceeding five years, unless sooner discharged, ten master-workmen, (sergeants,) at a compensation of twenty dollars a month each; twenty master-workmen, (corporals,) at a compen-

sation of fifteen dollars a month each; sixty artificers, of various kinds, at a compensation of ten dollars a month each: said master-workmen, mechanics, and artificers to be, in respect to all other allowances of rations, clothing, &c., on the same footing as orderly sergeants of the army, and to be subject to the rules and articles of war. I feel confident that such an arrangement would greatly increase the economy and efficiency of the services of the corps.

In the mere matters of the preservation of public property, and of repairs, the economy and efficiency of such an arrangement would be strikingly apparent.

Upon this subject I beg leave to annex an extract from a report from Major Graham, of the corps. As this officer had charge of the survey of the northeastern boundary, and had under him the detachment of enlisted men referred to, his experience and intelligence have enabled him to give highly valuable information directly applicable to the subject.

In reference to the duties of the office, no modification is recommended of clerk labor. Less than the number (four) now allowed would render it hardly possible to keep up the records, which an inspection of the amount of correspondence, reports, accounts, returns, and estimates which have to be written, recorded, and examined, will satisfy any one who will take the trouble to visit the office; and particularly will no increase of the clerk labor be required on the supposition that the proposed increase of the corps will be sanctioned, as in that case two or more officers of the corps could be occasionally attached to the bureau, to aid in the numerous drawings, estimates, and calculations, which the office has to make.

The reflection is not generally made, that, by the organization of the War Department into distinct bureaus, all the immense correspondence, and the detail duties of that department, have now to be performed by the several bureaus, which contain and preserve the records of the War Department on all the several subjects assigned to each bureau. The order, economy, promptness, and responsibility, which have attended this arrangement, are highly deserving of imitation and preservation, as essential to the despatch and efficiency of the duties of that department.

This office, however, suffers for aid in one respect, which it is proper to bring to your notice. There are seven rooms and eight fireplaces to be attended to, and but one messenger for these and his various out door duties. This occasions serious inconveniences, which have, from their pressing necessities, forced the department to the sanction of a temporary arrangement, to the prejudice of the compensation of the one messenger now allowed. It is therefore respectfully recommended that an assistant messenger be allowed, at a compensation of four hundred dollars per annum.

Another great inconvenience to which this as well as other bureaus is exposed, is the want of space for its duties and records. But as this matter has been before and frequently brought to the consideration of Congress, in the most detailed expositions, with estimates and plans for the public buildings required, it is not deemed requisite to do more in this communication than merely to call attention to it.

Respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

J. J. ABERT,

Colonel Corps Topographical Engineers.

Hon. W. L. MARCY,
Secretary of War.

Extract from the annual report of Major J. D. Graham, corps of topographical engineers, dated Monterey, Mexico, November 5, 1846.

The practical instruction which has also been imparted by the officers to the enlisted soldiers of artillery, who were detailed for this service, (the survey of the northeastern boundary,) has rendered them exceedingly useful and efficient.

In the field they have been taught to use the smaller instruments with a degree of practical accuracy entirely satisfactory; and in the office they are now engaged as assistants, under the general supervision of the officers, in computing the various astronomical observations that were made in the field. We have found them apt in receiving instruction, and ambitious to improve themselves. In figures, they soon became so accurate that they are now performing successfully, and with considerable rapidity, important parts of the computations for reducing the observations for latitude and longitude, from the most intricate mathematical formula.

In my last annual report I took occasion to refer specially to the usefulness of these men, and to recommend that a certain number of non-commissioned officers and men should be permanently attached, by enlistment, to the corps of topographical engineers.

Twelve sergeants, twelve corporals, and one hundred men, or at most one hundred and fifty men, would enable every party in the field to be supplied with at least one or two non-commissioned officers, and a suitable number of privates, to aid in such detailed operations as could be perfectly well executed by them, and would thus enable the officer to direct his attention to more general and important objects.

I am satisfied that such a system would add much to the economy of our operations, both in times of peace, and when serving with the armies in the field in time of war.

I beg leave to refer to my annual report of September 30, 1845, for the views then presented for your consideration.

In addition to those, I have been strongly impressed, from the information I have derived from the army in Mexico, of the importance of such an addition to the corps, for purposes purely military.

Among other duties of the corps specified in the general regulations for the army, it is charged with the military reconnaissances of the country in which an army may be operating, and with the construction and repair of military roads and bridges.

In order to perform these duties with promptness, (and promptness is an indispensable element to success in all operations in war,) the officers must be aided by operatives who should be well instructed in the particular duties required of them.

Many of those duties cannot be reached by the mere detail of men from the ranks of the army, as laboring or working parties, on the spur of the occasion.

If a bridge is to be thrown over a stream, or even to be repaired, or a road to be repaired in order to the passage of an army, (operations which are always, in war, required to be done quickly,) the necessary timbers must be promptly formed of the requisite dimensions, and with much accuracy in regard to shape and dimensions, otherwise the object will fail. These are duties requiring practical knowledge and skill on the part of the ope-

ratives. It would be very hazardous to intrust them to soldiers taken on an emergency from the ranks.

In regard to military reconnaissances of the country through which an army has to pass in time of war, it must be remarked that these are very incomplete unless they embrace a general knowledge of all roads and routes of communication within a certain distance of the army, to be constantly extended as the army advances. These roads should be laid down with accuracy and should form the basis of a general map of the country. They must be so laid down, day by day, as fast as the army marches. In order to do this, angles of deflection must be measured, at least approximately, by some small and handy instrument, such as a prismatic compass, or a pocket sextant. Distances must be approximately measured, either by a well-regulated pace, the result of much practice, or by a simple contrivance with an index attached to the wheel of a baggage wagon, called a perambulator, or a viameter.

Important positions for encampments, or for giving battle, must be kept constantly in view. A general knowledge of the position of the enemy, the peculiar advantage of the ground he or his detachments occupy, the best route for attacking him, must all be acquired from the reconnaissances of the topographical engineer; and he should be enabled to present rapid sketches, constantly showing to the general in command the results of his labors, in order that they may be constantly useful.

It is impossible that the number of officers likely to be assigned to a column of an army could, unaided by subordinates for acquiring the simple but necessary details, accomplish all that is requisite, as fast as an army moves. Their attention must, under the present organization, be confined to the most important localities, whereas they should be so organized as to be enabled to extend their knowledge over such an extent of surface as would, by uniting the labors of the several columns of an army, give a map of the whole theatre of military operations, of such details of topographical features as would be of inappreciable value to the general in directing its movements.

On the score of economy, there would be great advantage from the system proposed.

If these non-commissioned officers and men were placed upon the same footing, as to compensation, with those of the Ordnance Department, the inducement held out by the great advantage of permanent over temporary employment would enable us to enlist into the corps young men of good moral character, and of good common school education, who would be very efficient in using the smaller instruments in reconnoitring or surveying, in plotting the work, in the care of instruments in transportation, in noting time by the chronometers, and in recording observations as announced by the observers, in performing certain logarithmic calculations for reducing the observations, &c. &c.

For these duties, we are now obliged to hire men at from \$1 to \$2 per day, and subsist them; besides which, much time is consumed in instructing them, so as to bring them to a proper degree of training, before they can be efficient. At the end of every season these are discharged, and a new set must be again instructed when another operation is to be undertaken. The government thus loses the advantage of that proficiency which has been acquired at its cost.

When the trigonometrical and topographical survey of Great Britain

was commenced, laborers from civil life were hired for the subordinate duties. Experience soon proved that the system was inefficient and too expensive, and Colonel Colby, the officer in charge of the topographical department of their engineer service, was aided by the addition of two hundred enlisted non-commissioned officers and men, permanently attached to the royal engineers, and assigned especially to that branch of their service.

It was from a detachment of this branch of the British service that their engineer officers received such efficient aid in the capacity of surveyors, and assistants to the astronomical observers, in the late survey and demarcation of our boundary line agreed upon under the treaty of Washington. My own observation of their promptitude and efficiency, as well as that of the artillery detachment, employed for similar duties on the part of our own government upon that line, have impressed me so strongly with the advantage of the system, on the grounds both of economy and efficiency, that I cannot but hope that it will be adopted as a permanent system in behalf of our own corps.

Our British colleagues possessed an advantage over us in the thorough instruction and practical experience their men had received in these duties before they left England; whereas our officers were obliged to devote time and attention to the instruction of our own men, who were temporarily detailed from the ranks of the army to answer the emergency. Then, again, the regiments from which our men were detailed several times demanded them back again for regimental duty, contending that they would lose in efficiency for that sort of duty if kept too long absent from their respective companies. Twice was I deprived of them after they became efficient for our service, and a new detail, from another regiment, had to be carried anew through all the course of preliminary instruction before they were rendered efficient.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. D. GRAHAM,

Major Topographical Engineers.

Col J. J. ABERT,

Chief Topographical Engineers, U. S. A., Washington.

ORDNANCE OFFICE,

Washington, December 10, 1846.

SIR: Referring to the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 10th of August last, I have the honor to report that no change can, in my opinion, be made that will secure greater economy or more efficiency in this branch of the public service, so far as the duties of this office are concerned. As regards the ordnance department generally, I have had the honor to present, in the annual report of operations, my views in relation to the necessity for such changes as appeared to me to be requisite both for economy and efficiency.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

G. TALCOTT, *Lt. Col. Ordnance.*

Hon. W. L. MARCY,

Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Office Indian Affairs, December 30, 1846.

SIR: The resolution of the House of Representatives of the 10th August last, requiring information as to "whether any and what changes can be made in the several branches of the public service, by which greater economy and more or equal efficiency be secured in their administration," having been referred by you to this office for a report, I have the honor to submit the following:

Since the act of June 30, 1834, reorganizing this branch of the public service, the condition of things has become so changed as to require material and corresponding alterations in the organization then prescribed. Some of the provisions of that act, in reference to the number of agents to be employed, were temporary. It provided for, permanently, one superintendent (to reside at St. Louis) of all the tribes west of the Mississippi; two agents for the western territory, to act as agents for such tribes as the President might designate; one of whom the President was authorized, by the last section of another act of the same date regulating trade and intercourse, to require to perform, in addition to his appropriate duties as agent, those of superintendent for such tribes west as he might think proper, from the superintendence of which the superintendent at St. Louis was to be relieved. The act first mentioned further provided for an agent for the Chickasaws; one at Prairie du Chien for the Sacs and Foxes; one for Michilimackinac and the Sault Ste. Marie; one at St. Peter's, on the upper Mississippi; and one for the upper Missouri. Pursuant to the authority given, one of the two agents for the western territory was required to act as agent for the Choctaws, and to perform the duties of superintendent for that tribe, the Chickasaws, Creeks, Seminoles, Cherokees, Senecas and Shawnees, and the Quapaws; the other was required to act as agent for the Delawares, Kanzas, Shawnees, and Kickapoos. All the tribes north of those embraced within the acting superintendency were in the charge of the superintendent at St. Louis. The same act also provided for a competent number of sub agents, according to the wants of the service. The salary of the superintendent at St. Louis, and those of the several agents, were fixed at fifteen hundred dollars, and those of the sub-agents at seven hundred and fifty dollars. The acts establishing the Territories of Wisconsin and Iowa required their governors to act ex-officio as superintendents of Indian affairs within these territories, for which they were allowed a special compensation—the former of fifteen hundred dollars, and the latter of one thousand dollars; and the fifth section of the appropriation act of June 14, 1836, added to the duties of the Michilimackinac agent those of superintendent within the boundaries of Michigan. By the third section of the appropriation act of March 3d, 1837, the President was authorized to appoint three additional agents—one for the Cherokees, one for the Creeks, and one for the tribes high up the upper Missouri; and, by an act of 27th June last, an agent was authorized for the upper Platte and upper Arkansas.

Iowa having become a State, the superintendence exercised by the territorial governor has necessarily again devolved upon the superintendent at St. Louis. There are thus, now, one full superintendent, the governor of Wisconsin acting as such; eleven agents, two of whom perform the additional duties of superintendents; and thirteen sub agents; the aggregate

amount of whose compensation annually is \$29,250. Wisconsin, it is expected, will soon become a State also, when that superintendency will have to be assigned to the agent for Michilimackinac. The admission of Texas, and the duty of managing the relations with the Indians within her limits, will render necessary a new arrangement for the superintendence of our Indian affairs in the south and southwest.

Since the act of June 30th, 1834, several causes have combined to render the duties of the several agents and sub-agents much more extensive, arduous, and responsible. Under authority granted by that act, the payment of the annuities and other disbursements were made principally by officers of the army, in whose high character, intelligence, and carefulness to avoid the commission of any act that would jeopard their commissions, the government had a good guarantee that they would execute this delicate and responsible duty in a proper manner. This authority was revoked by the act for the increase of the military establishment of July 5, 1838, and this additional duty necessarily devolved upon the superintendents, agents, and sub-agents. It has several times since been proposed and strongly recommended that four additional army paymasters should be appointed, in order that the disbursements for the Indian service might be made by officers of that class. This arrangement would in some respects be a good one. It is always highly desirable that where, as in the Indian department, the disbursements are sufficiently large to justify it, they should be made by other persons than those who contract for, purchase, or have the control and supervision of the objects for which the payments are made, as the two classes act as mutual checks upon each other, and as a safeguard against speculation and improper expenditure. But, as the mingling together of the two different descriptions of duty would be objectionable, and the exigencies of the military service might occasionally interfere with paymasters being available at the proper time for duty in the Indian department, it is believed that the arrangement herein proposed would be better as well as more economical.

In some instances, the duties of the superintendents, agents, and sub-agents have been further increased, since the act referred to, by the assignment to their charge of other tribes or bands that have changed their positions. More particular attention has of late years, also, been given to the subject of education among the Indians, and their improvement in agriculture and the mechanic arts, which have imposed additional duties of a higher order upon the agents of the department. The success of the efforts of the government in this great and important intellectual, moral, and social enterprise greatly depends upon the character of the superintendents and agents, who should, therefore, in all cases, be men of high character and intelligence. The compensation at present authorized for the sub-agents, the duties of some of whom are of equal or more importance than those of some of the agents, is not sufficient to induce men of that description to banish themselves beyond the confines of civilized life, and to assume the labors and responsibilities of those situations. It is certainly an unwise economy to impose upon any agent of the government duties for the discharge of which he is not adequately compensated; for the result in most cases is likely to be, either that the duties will be slighted, or that further compensation will be sought in illegitimate and improper sources.

In consequence of the accession of the Texas Indians, of the discon-

tinuance of the Iowa superintendency, and the prospect of the early termination of that of Wisconsin, three full superintendencies, including that at St. Louis—two to be west and one east of the Mississippi—will be indispensable to the efficient and proper administration of this branch of the public service. However great the zeal and ability at the seat of government, and however strong the desire here to administer the affairs of this department in a prompt, efficient, and economical manner, a proper number of intelligent, upright, firm, and able superintendents would, in consequence of the great distance of many of the operations of the department, greatly contribute to this desirable end. The agents and sub-agents are insensibly partial in their representations respecting the condition and affairs of the tribes in their charge; they naturally wish to show as favorable a state of things as possible, in order that they may appear as well or better than those in other agencies. The superintendents, acting as inspectors for all the tribes within their jurisdiction, are the sources of impartial and well arranged and digested information, upon which the department could rely and base many of its most important measures. They are also safer and better depositaries for the discretionary authority which has sometimes to be conferred, in matters respecting which the department cannot give precise and specific instructions, because all the circumstances and contingencies cannot be foreseen and provided for at the seat of government. An immediate and rigid supervision also tends to make the agents and sub-agents careful, prompt, and exact in the performance of their duties. An agent of a tribe acting as superintendent is too much upon the same footing with other agents, and also too much confined by his local duties as agent, to do justice to the higher and more important duties of superintendent. The independent and superior position of superintendent is requisite, in order that he may have that standing, authority, and influence, which will cause his directions to be cheerfully, promptly, and properly obeyed. With a sufficient number of superintendents, they could make the greater part of the heavy disbursements themselves, or immediately superintend their being made by the agents, and thus the superintendents and agents would be checks upon each other.

The concentration of the Indians west of the Mississippi, since the act of 1834, has almost entirely done away with the necessity which then existed of having separate agents or sub-agents for each separate and distinct tribe or band. Where, therefore, two or more tribes or bands are adjacent, between whom there is a good understanding, it is believed that their affairs could be as well and satisfactorily, and certainly more economically managed by one intelligent and efficient agent, as if there were one agent or sub-agent for each. By this arrangement, there would be not only the difference in the amount of compensation saved, but also the difference in the expense between keeping up the house, office, &c., of one agent, and those of a greater number.

Either the compensation of the superintendent and acting superintendents is too small, or that of the agents too great. There is certainly neither reason nor justice in allowing a superintendent only what is allowed to an agent. The former usually lives at much more expensive points; has an office of a higher grade, requiring higher qualifications, imposing greater responsibilities, and one of his duties is the immediate supervision, under the general direction of this office, of the acts of the agent. There

should, it is believed, be a difference of at least four hundred dollars in the salaries of the two officers. The compensation of the superintendents should, in my judgment, be at least sixteen hundred dollars; and I think that twelve hundred dollars for the agents, and eight hundred each for the limited number of sub-agents still required for isolated tribes, would be fair rates of pay for these two classes, as their houses and fuel are furnished by government, and they generally have land to cultivate without charge.

It is believed that by the above plan of assigning several contiguous tribes or bands to the charge of one efficient agent, where circumstances justify it, three superintendents, about eight agents, and four sub-agents, would be sufficient, instead of the one superintendent, eleven agents, (two acting as superintendents,) one governor, (ex officio superintendent,) and the thirteen sub-agents, now employed. At the rates of salary herein proposed, this would produce a saving of \$11,650 in compensation alone, while the annual saving in consequence of the reduction in the number of the establishments of agents and sub-agents would probably not be very far less.

The above contemplated arrangement, except that the superintendencies would be sufficient to include Texas, has no reference to that State and Oregon; but it is believed that the requisite agencies for them could be established, and, with their incidental expenses, not exceed in cost the amount of the saving indicated; so that the operations of the department, though greatly extended and enlarged, may be conducted at an expense not exceeding that heretofore annually incurred.

With respect to this office particularly, the progress made in the settling up of the Choctaw and other reservation cases, of business connected with former emigrations of Indians, and of that connected with our involved relations with the Cherokees, together with the recent new classification and distribution of business among the clerks, will enable it to dispense with one of its clerks, receiving a salary of one thousand dollars; and when these matters are further advanced, and the new arrangement shall have brought about greater simplicity and facility in the transaction of the business of the office, it is expected that a further reduction may be made. The changed relative position of the clerks in reference to business, and towards each other, however, renders just and proper a slight increase in compensation in two cases. The chief clerk receives only the same grade of salary (sixteen hundred dollars) as two others. His special and particular division of duties not only equals theirs in character, extent, and responsibility, but, in addition, he has, under the general direction of the head of the office, the supervision of the business of the whole office. In principle and justice he should, therefore, receive a higher grade of compensation; and I would respectfully recommend that, out of the thousand dollars dispensed with, one hundred be added to his salary, making it seventeen hundred dollars. This is the rate of salary allowed the chief clerk in the more important bureaus generally, while other principal clerks are allowed eighteen hundred dollars; and the chief clerk in one bureau receives two thousand dollars. For similar reasons, there should be two hundred dollars added to one of the thousand dollar salaries of the office. This would absorb three hundred of the thousand

dollar salary dispensed with, and make a saving of seven hundred dollars in the amount paid annually for clerk hire in this office.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. MEDILL.

Hon. W. L. MARCY,

Secretary of War.

PENSION OFFICE, *December 10, 1846.*

SIR: I have duly considered the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 10th of August last, and I am not aware of any changes that can be made in the branch of public service over which I have control, "by which greater economy and more or equal efficiency can be secured," except the allowance of compensation to agents for paying pensions, to which you have referred in your annual report at the commencement of the present session of Congress, and the erection of public buildings for the accommodation of offices which are now kept in private buildings. I do not consider it necessary to enlarge on these subjects, as they have frequently been brought to the notice of Congress in former reports made to that body.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. L. EDWARDS,

Commissioner of Pensions.

Hon. W. L. MARCY,

Secretary of War.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON
FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY
WASHINGTON

LETTER

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